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Preventing Blood Clots After Surgery

Deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, occurs when a blood clot forms in one of the deep veins of the body. This can happen if a vein becomes damaged or if the blood flow within a vein slows down or stops. While there are several risk factors for developing a DVT, a significant one is having major surgery. Below are recommendations to follow:

Medication Prevention

Your surgical team will provide you with medication after surgery to help decrease the risk of DVT's. It is very common to use aspirin though some patients may require different medications based on their specific risk factors. Please ensure that you take these medications per the instructions and reach out to your surgical team if there are any questions. For patients already on blood thinning medications typically resuming your home dose after surgery is adequate.

Calf Pumps

Point toes on both feet towards the ceiling and then towards the floor 10 times every 30-45 minutes while awake.

Walking

Get up and walk at least 10 steps every 60-90 minutes while awake with any necessary walking devices (walker, cane)

Symptoms

Some symptoms of DVT can include severe increase in pain and swelling in the lower leg, especially in the calf. This can also be associated with noticeable color change in the lower leg separate from bruising. If a blood clot leaves the leg and travels to the lungs, symptoms can include sudden onset of chest pain, shortness of breath and/or coughing. If you notice any of these symptoms above, please immediately notify your surgical team or the on-call team after hours as this may necessitate presenting to the emergency department for further evaluation.